

Knowing of your interest in homeland security and immigration matters I wanted to discuss two important issues concerning security on the U.S. – Mexico border. First, President Barack Obama announced last week that he plans to send 1,200 National Guard to the Arizona border with Mexico. The President made this decision in response to the lawlessness and drug trafficking crisis that threatens our security. This long overdue action is a welcome development, but I believe much more is needed to secure our border. Also last week, Senator John McCain offered an amendment to a troop funding bill that would have called on the President to send 6,000 National Guard troops to the border. Unfortunately, the Senate rejected it 51-46; 60 votes were needed for it to pass. The House will likely consider the troop funding legislation in June, however, and I will strongly support efforts to urge the President to increase the amount of National Guard troops assigned to the border and other efforts to secure our nation's borders.

Secondly, I have been very concerned with reports that the federal government's own land management agencies have restricted the ability of Customs and Border Protection agents to patrol federal lands along the Mexican border. In response to these disturbing claims, I recently co-sponsored [legislation](#) to prohibit the Secretary of the Interior or Secretary of Agriculture – both of whom oversee vast areas of federal lands along the border and throughout the West – from taking any action that impedes border enforcement activities by the Department of Homeland Security on public land. While federal policies that restrict access and multiple-use for the general public are egregious in their own right, it is simply unacceptable to impose those same policies on the federal agency that is responsible for securing our homeland. I look forward to working with other lawmakers to pass this legislation and ensure that Customs and Border Protection has full and unfettered access to those areas of our border that are controlled by the federal government.